technical specifications has submitted its Report; and

(d) what are the recommendations made by the Expert Committee?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) The inter-Governmental agreement (IGA) signed on 4th October, 2000, *inter-alia* provides for the acquisition of Admiral Gorshkov, an aircraft carrier from Russia and its refit and modernisation. The committee constituted to examine the Detailed Project Document (DPD) received from Russia has, recently, submitted its report. Investment decision on the acquisition of Admiral Gorshkov has not yet been taken.

Shortage of officers in Armed Forces

314. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the news-item "Defence jobs lose their sheen" published in the News times dated the 19th September, 2001;

(b) if so, the number of officers' shortage in Army, Navy and Air Force during the last three years, year-wise and wing-wise;

(c) the reasons for not filling in the vacancies and also the reasons for early retirement of such officers; and

(d) steps being taken by Union Government to fill in the vacant posts?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The total shortage of officers in Army, Navy and Air Force during the last three years is as under:

Year	Army	Navy	Air Force
1999	13684	993	1770
2000	14202	965	1856
2001	13744	964	1860

With the opening up of the economy leading to new vistas of lucrative job opportunities in the civil sector, coupled with relatively risky and hazardous career in the armed forces, there has been some impact on youth's preference for a career in the armed forces. The premature retirement of officers in the three Services is mainly on account of supersession, on medical and extreme compassionate grounds.

Several steps have been initiated by the Government. An Image Projection Campaign of the Army was launched during 1997-98. The campaign has made a positive impact on the availability and selection of candidates. Steps have been taken to continue the campaign.

Sustained publicity efforts are on to attract talented youth to join the Air Force. About 3000 schools and colleges are on the mailing list for sending the publicity material. Schools and colleges are visited regularly for administering motivational talks.

Increased publicity and candidate friendly recruitment procedures have been adopted by Navy in addition to general publicity and motivation drives.

Training courses for anti-germ warfare by DRDE

315. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Defence Research and Development Establishment (DRDE) propose to conduct training courses for anti-germ warfare in view of the Anthrax scare;